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In Memoriam

Leonard Stanley Dudgeon

1876-1938

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by H. R. Dean & others

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Portrait by] [*Hay Wrightson, London, W.*1.

LEONARD STANLEY DUDGEON

OBITUARY NOTICE OF DECEASED MEMBER.

Leonard Stanley Dudgeon.

1876–1938.

(Plate XXVI.)

Leonard Stanley Dudgeon, the son of John Hepburn Dudgeon of Haddington, East Lothian, was born in 1876 and educated at University College School and St Thomas's Hospital. He qualified by way of the Diploma of the Conjoint Board, and subsequently obtained the Membership of the Royal College of Physicians in 1901 and was elected to the Fellowship in 1908.

At the end of his tenure of the office of house physician, Dudgeon began his career as a pathologist at the West London Hospital, Hammersmith, whence he was recalled to St Thomas's in 1903 to succeed C. G. Seligman as Superintendent of the Louis Jenner Clinical Laboratory. Dudgeon was then 27 years old and clinical pathology was in its infancy. Teaching in pathology at St Thomas's was limited in extent and but little co-ordinated with clinical instruction. Elementary lectures on general pathology delivered by Samuel George Shattock in his own inimitable way drew large audiences and short courses of lectures were given on various aspects of pathology by the honorary physicians. Morbid anatomy was taught admirably by assistant physicians in the post-mortem room but other practical teaching in pathology was limited to the occasional demonstration of sections. The first class in practical bacteriology was held in 1903.

Dudgeon returned to St Thomas's to find students eager to be taught and colleagues very willing to take full advantage of the applications of pathology and bacteriology to medicine and surgery. The clinical laboratory at St Thomas's was, like all similar departments in those days, a small affair of two rooms of moderate size. Within this small laboratory Dudgeon worked, interrupted only by the Great War, for thirty-five years. As a pathologist, he ended his life where he started it. The Jenner Laboratory had crept a little further along the first-floor corridor of the hospital. Three rooms, not large ones, had been added to the original two. They all led out of each other, and a colleague calling to see him in the last few weeks of his life would have gone in by the same door that he had used as a student thirty-odd years before. But small though

the laboratory was it was built on the main corridor of the first floor and in the very middle of the hospital, and under Dudgeon's guidance it became the centre of hospital life. The staff consisted of a director, an assistant director and a boy, but senior students were allowed to help in the work of the little department. For a clerkship in the clinical laboratory there was always keen competition and successful candidates for this appointment thought themselves to be, and indeed were, fortunate among their fellows. As the clock struck ten a firm and familiar footstep was heard in the corridor, the door of the laboratory was thrown open, a silk hat was hung on a peg and a very large overall was put on : the day's work had begun. The examination of every specimen which came to the laboratory was as thorough and complete as the methods of the day allowed. A high standard of technical skill was expected. Clumsiness was rebuked with jovial abuse but carelessness and slackness were sins for which there was no forgiveness. Every specimen was submitted to long and careful scrutiny and the results of the examination were embodied in a written report which was short, definite and final. Many of Dudgeon's pupils acquired in a few months considerable manual dexterity and a useful knowledge of laboratory methods : there can have been few who failed to appreciate the importance of care, accuracy and honesty in the application of laboratory methods to clinical practice. The visits which Dudgeon paid to cases in the wards to collect specimens or to confer with clinical colleagues provided fruitful opportunities for instruction. Dudgeon never collected a specimen for a laboratory test until he had made himself familiar with the details of the case. Usually he examined the patient. In these short lessons on bedside pathology Dudgeon rendered his pupils his greatest service : from this repeated correlation of the results of clinical observation with laboratory findings he built up an experience, probably unrivalled, which formed the basis of his outlook on pathology and influenced all his teaching.

Not the least valuable of Dudgeon's qualities was his great energy, which enabled him to work long hours on end without loss of interest and in his earlier days without signs of fatigue. The routine work of the clinical laboratory occupied him continuously from ten o'clock until teatime. He ate no lunch on week days. At five o'clock he began his research work which was often continued with an interval for dinner until a late hour of the night.

During the period which began with his appointment as superintendent of the clinical laboratory and which ended with the outbreak of the War, Dudgeon occupied a very important position in the life of St Thomas's Hospital and exercised a remarkable influence on its medical school. He earned and held the respect of his senior colleagues and made the clinical laboratory one of the

most important departments of the hospital. But it was on the younger men that he exerted his greatest influence. He was still a young man and he lived on terms of friendship and intimacy with senior students, house officers and junior members of the honorary staff. The clinical laboratory was the place of meeting for Dudgeon's friends and he had many. His advice was often sought, his help was freely given and the knowledge that he could and did help his friends brought him great happiness. Many men who to-day hold important posts in the world of medicine owe their first success in life to Dudgeon, for he gave them good advice and active help to follow it.

In his early days Dudgeon came under the fortunate influence of S. G. Shattock for whom he always felt a warm affection and a deep and loyal respect. From Shattock he acquired a close and precise knowledge of morbid anatomy and histology. Under Shattock's influence Dudgeon's work was widened to include an interest in problems which were less directly connected with the wards, though his main focus of interest never shifted.

His paper with Shattock in 1908 on the phagocytosis of melanin particles by leucocytes and on the effect of normal serum on this reaction was an important contribution to a problem which has not yet been completely solved. His paper with Shattock, Seligman and Panton on the relation of avian to human tuberculosis, published in the same year, afforded clear evidence of the resistance of fowls and pigeons to the human type of tubercle bacillus. His work with J. B. Leathes on the nature of the fatty changes produced by diphtheria toxin has been often quoted.

Perhaps his most important studies from the more academic point of view were those on the inhibitory effect of bacterial extracts, and of the bacterial products contained in inflammatory exudates, on opsonification. The earlier papers dealing with this subject were published in 1909-1911 in collaboration with Panton and Wilson, and a long series of later experiments were recorded in his Croonian lectures in 1912. These studies afforded a clear demonstration of the specific mechanism involved in the aggressive action of the substances derived from bacterial cells, both in the test tube and in the tissues.

From 1915 till 1919 Dudgeon served in the Near East as a temporary colonel in the A.M.S. In Gallipoli and in Macedonia he did invaluable work as a consulting bacteriologist, and he gained a wide experience of certain bacterial and protozoal infections which he had not previously encountered in epidemic form. The characteristics which always distinguished his work—his love of precision, his vigorous dislike of vagueness, even when a definite opinion seemed to go a little beyond the evidence, his willingness to come to a decision and act on it—made him an

ideal advisor for harassed medical officers faced with practical difficulties that would not brook delay. And his advice was not only practical, it was good; for his opinions, though didactic in form, were always based on accurate observation and a careful consideration of all relevant factors.

Dudgeon returned to St Thomas's in 1919 and in July of that year the University of London conferred on him the title of professor of pathology. He became increasingly absorbed in administrative duties and on the retirement of Sir Cuthbert Wallace, he succeeded to the deanship of the Medical School. He took over a flourishing institution and under his rule the School never looked back. Owing to the generosity of certain of his private patients and to his own financial ability, he was able to carry out many necessary structural alterations, rebuilding the anatomical department and the post-mortem rooms. Though himself essentially practical in outlook, he was always in sympathy with the teachers of the scientific subjects and lent a ready ear to their requests for improved equipment. He realised that the London student had suffered in the past from a relatively indifferent grounding in the basic sciences as compared with the man who joined the School from the older universities, and to obviate this defect he developed a system under which selected students were enabled to proceed to a B.Sc. degree before passing on to clinical subjects. He also did much to establish a liaison between the hospitals of the London County Council and the teaching schools, with a view to rendering the vast clinical material of the public institutions available for the instruction of the medical student. He served on the Voluntary Hospitals Committee and was chairman of the Deans Committee and a member of the Senate of the University of London. With these numerous administrative duties and the increasing demands of private practice, Dudgeon during his later years had but little time available for research. After his return from Macedonia he published some valuable papers on the dysenteries and latterly developed a rapid method of tumour diagnosis by smears, which he applied with conspicuous success to sputum, gastric contents and excised growths. He was an excellent teacher and possessed a fund of information derived from forty years' experience of clinical pathology which was always at the disposal of his younger colleagues.

On the teaching of pathology, especially in the London schools, Dudgeon's influence was considerable. He taught pathology not as an isolated subject but as an integral and essential part of medical science. In all his teaching he emphasised the close relationship of pathology with clinical medicine and surgery but he never allowed his pupils or his colleagues to forget that a sound knowledge of pathology was as essential as clinical experience in

the training of a physician or surgeon. In all his dealings he maintained his firm belief in the equal status of pathology with other subjects in the medical hierarchy and he thought that students should be taught and examined in pathology by pathologists. His robust common sense and his wise counsels will be greatly missed both in his School and in the University of London.

The value of Dudgeon's work in his chosen field was widely recognised. He was chosen to deliver the Horace Dobell and Croonian lectures before the Royal College of Physicians, and the Erasmus Wilson lecture before the Royal College of Surgeons. During his War service in the Near East he was thrice mentioned in dispatches, and was awarded the C.M.G. and C.B.E., and the Order of St Sava of Servia.

To his friends Dudgeon was loyal and lovable, and most generous whenever his help was asked. Those who knew him best liked him best. He did not conceal his opinions, whether of men or of things; but he always conceded to others the same freedom of expression that he employed himself. He added salt to life for those who knew him, and for this, as for other things, they owe him a debt that they will not forget. Hartley.

He married Norah, third daughter of Richard Orpen, of Kenmare, Co. Kerry. She survives him, with a daughter and two sons.

H. R. D.
W. W. C. T.
O. L. V. S. DE W.

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